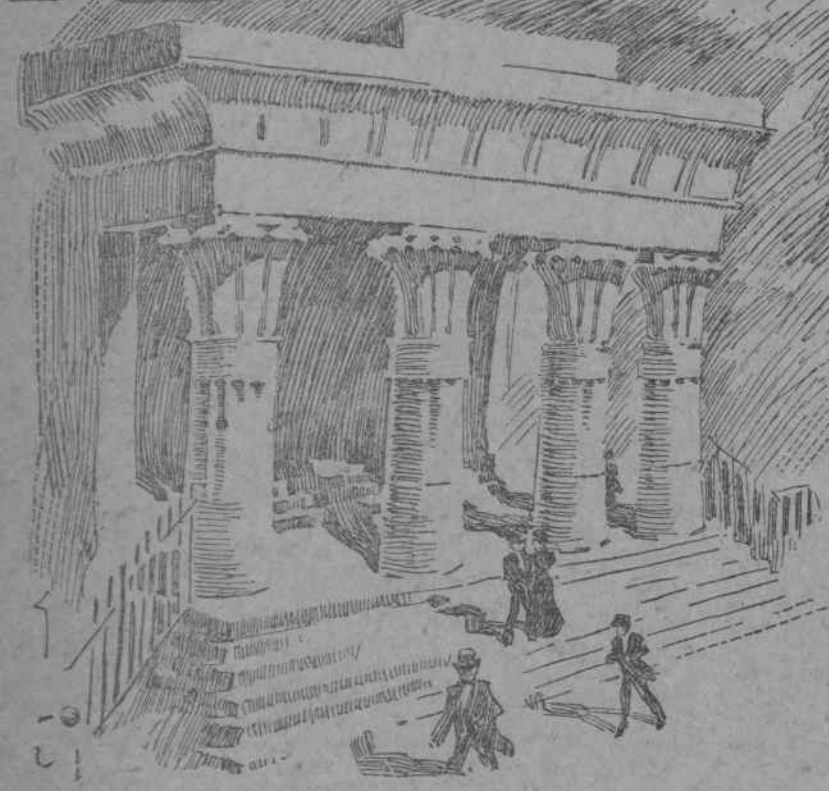


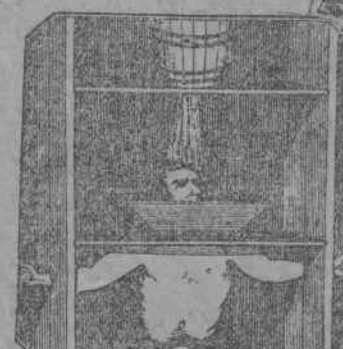
A VOICE FROM THE TOMBS



AN ESCAPE.



THE "JEWELRY"



THE BATH.

The True Story of AMERICA'S MOST FAMOUS JAIL. Told for the First Time by EX-INSPECTOR BYRNES.

Illustrated from a rare old history of the Tombs.

I WAS a great many years before I knew anything about crime and the men and women who make it, that the City Prison which is known almost everywhere that the English tongue is spoken, as well as in many places that it isn't—that the Tombs was erected. To be exact in point of time, the work on construction was begun in 1833 and was finished five years later. It is a fact, and an interesting fact, too, that the erection of the Tombs made what was intended to be a residential district occupied by a respectable class of people, the heart of the city slum.

Early in the century a committee of public opinion-forming citizens endeavored to prevail upon the authorities to lay out a small public park to surround the old Collect, or Fresh Water Pond, the basin



Colt's Marriage Just Before He Was to be Hanged.

of which was where the Tombs now is. Had their plans been carried out there would not have been the murderous Five Points of thirty years ago nor the various other disreputable sections which for so many years were contiguous to the great prison. But perhaps it was proper that the jail, which was to hold criminals of all grades, representing every migratory nation on the earth, should be located upon the very spot where the sewage of a great city was gathered in a pond, the appropriate name of which was the Collect.

What wonderful stories, what romances, what comedies, what tragedies, the slime-stained walls of this gloomy pile could tell were speech vouchsafed them! If there were some Pyramion to carve statues from this old stone what interesting information we would obtain! The Tombs is a concrete rogues' gallery, more remarkable than all the pictorial collections of rogues' physiognomies that I have ever seen. Men of great mental ability and women of irresistible physical charms have begun and have ended their careers of crime there. Births and deaths, marriages and funerals have been celebrated there, and while confinement within its walls has so terrorized the wretched that many a career of crime has been ended in the bid, it is undeniably true that the long delays which frequently occur between the date of arrest and the time of trial have permitted hardened criminals to plot schemes in their idle hours which were put into successful execution when their period of liberty arrived.

But there is one bright spot in the history of the site of the Tombs. Just one hundred years ago the first steamboat ever seen on this national waterway sailed its way around the old pond. It was a yawlboat fitted up with crude machinery, and it was operated by its inventor and builder, John Fitch. Fitcher Fulton took a trip in the craft, and his inventive brain quickly saw opportunities for improvement.

Within less than a year from the time the Tombs received its first inmate the work of the hangman began there. That was on the morning of January 12, 1839, when a negro named Edward Coleman was suspended from the gibbet for the murder

and keen-edged knife. The hands of the dead man was folded upon his breast, and that fact, added to the mysterious fire in the cupola, led many persons to believe that Colt had escaped to life and freedom, and that the body of some unfortunate had been smuggled into the prison cell during the confusion to establish the theory of suicide. Whether Colt went to his death that day or whether he is living in this is a question upon which there is no positive information.

We hear a great deal nowadays about sensationalism and about catering to the vitiated tastes of the masses. Let me tell you something that occurred in connection with the Dr. Burdell murder case in 1857. Mrs. Cunningham, who was tried for the murder of the doctor, whom the jury pronounced not guilty, put forth a well grounded claim to the title and position of widow of the murdered man. One of the exhibits offered by her in evidence was a girl baby. Oakley Hall, then the District Attorney for this county, subsequently Mayor of the city, and now a practicing lawyer in the local courts, produced proof positive that the baby was a bogus one, and was the child of a family named Anderson. The original and only P. T. Barnum was then running a moral museum at Broadway and Ann street, and he immediately secured the infant and its real mother and placed them on exhibition, charging an admission fee of a quarter of a dollar! Could the dime museum managers of to-day or the barkers of Coney Island's Bowery do anything more sensationally audacious than that in this year of happiness?

Hicks the Pirate was a prisoner in the Tombs from the time of his arrest until the morning of his execution. Then he was taken to Bedloe's Island, where the Statue of Liberty now stands, and on Friday, July 13, 1860, he was put to death in the presence of upward of ten thousands of persons. That ocean Leviathan, the Great Eastern, was then lying in the North River, and she was an object of much curiosity. Hicks made known his desire to see this mammoth steamship, and United States Marshal Rynders, who had charge of the execution party, gave orders for the steamboat which they had boarded at the foot of Canal street to go up the river and to make a circuit of the big English vessel before proceeding to the execution ground.

Some officials were very accommodating in those days.

Emotional insanity is something that you don't hear much about nowadays. It reached the climax of its successful usage in the trial of Daniel McFarland for the murder of Albert D. Richardson in the Tribune building on the 25th day of November, 1869. McFarland had fought his way upward from a poor orphan through the grades of mechanic, laborer, harness maker and jack-of-all-trades, stimulated by a desire for knowledge, until he was admitted to the Bar in Massachusetts. Forty-five years ago he met Abby Sage, who was a factory girl wearing short skirts in a New Hampshire mill town. He married her when he was twenty years of age, and they lived happily until he became dissipated and neglectful of her.

Mrs. McFarland met Richardson at a time when she was without money or friends, and almost without a home. He gave her a new start in life. She left her husband and applied for a divorce from him. The afternoon in which the murder was committed was advancing into twilight when McFarland came into the business office of the Tribune, then, as now, at the corner of Spruce and Nassau streets. He waited the coming of Richardson, who was then on the staff of the Tribune, and as the latter entered the office McFarland advanced toward him and shot him in a vital spot.

Five days after the shooting Mrs. McFarland, who had secured a divorce from McFarland, was married to Richardson as he lay on his deathbed in the Astor House. Henry Ward Beecher performed the marriage ceremony, and that event marked the beginning of his troubles.

It was asserted that Richardson had professed belief in the theories of the "Free Lovers," and because of that it was argued that a clergyman of the prominence of Mr. Beecher should not have performed the marriage ceremony. Two days after the wedding Richardson died, and a few months later the trial of McFarland began. Eldridge T. Gerry was one of his lawyers, and he was set free by the jury, after which he sunk into obscurity. Under the name of Abby Sage Richardson his one-time wife has become well known as a lecturer and as a writer of plays.

Beyond question, the most sensational, as well as the most skillfully planned, escape from a penal institution in modern times was that which William J. Sharkey effected from the Tombs about the noon hour of November 10, 1873. Sharkey's parents were reputable, well-known and reasonably well-off residents of the Ninth Ward, that West Side section of old New York. His first success was as a political leader, and he received a nomination for a union office, to which he would have undoubtedly been elected but for the treachery of some of his supporters. This failure changed the course of his efforts, and he became a thief and a gambler.

One of his confederates was Robert S. Dunn, oftentimes known as Bob Isaacs, a gambler and all-round sport. From being friends they became enemies through Sharkey ad-

vancing Dunn \$600 with which to run a gambling house in Buffalo. After the funeral of a fellow member of a political organization, which occurred on the first Sunday in September, 1872, Sharkey and Dunn met in a Hudson street saloon by accident. In response to a demand for the money due, Dunn said that he did not have it, and Sharkey pulled a hair-triggered pistol, which he instantly discharged at his delinquent debtor. He escaped, but was soon captured and was sentenced to death. Sharkey had a sweetheart, by name Maggie Jordan, who was the daughter of reputable people residing near to Sharkey's former home. Each was very much in love with the other, and Maggie came to the Tombs every day that she was permitted to see Sharkey and remained from the first minute of the visiting hour until the last.

Her infatuation and devotion to this man idealized her life. She came to the prison early on the morning of November 10, 1873, and went immediately to Sharkey's cell, which was on the second floor. Two hours later the wife of "Boss" Allen, one of the notorious Allen brothers, applied for permission to visit a prisoner friend of hers, which was granted. Visitors were given tickets as soon as they were admitted past the entrance gate, and they were required to surrender them on leaving prison. To the surprise of the keepers, Maggie Jordan passed out to the prison gates a full hour before the time allowed to visitors had been reached.

Shortly after her departure, about half an hour, a rather odd looking female surrendered a visitor's ticket and walked through the outer door to the street, reaching which she ran to an upbound car passing along Centre street and jumped upon it while it was in active motion, much to the surprise of a policeman who was patrolling his post nearby. When the time came to clear the prison of all visitors Mrs. "Boss" Allen tried to march out in the crowd, but was stopped by a keeper, who demanded her ticket. This she was unable to produce, and, as she had been seen in front of Sharkey's cell talking with the prisoner and with Maggie Jordan, she was detained until the cells were searched.

Word was quickly brought that Sharkey's cell was empty. Examination showed that Sharkey had directed himself of much of his ordinary clothing and had put on woman's garments, which had been smuggled into his cell. His luxuriant and jet black mustache was found wet with lather in his apartment, and evidences of rapid preparation and hurried departure were numerous. Maggie Jordan was arrested, and when apprised of Sharkey's escape she vented her joy in hysterical weeping and avowals of happiness. Sharkey escaped to Europe, and Maggie Jordan followed him. To reach him she sailed almost around the world in the belief that she would thus throw the authorities off Sharkey's track, and often since that lengthy journey of love she has said that each night when she laid down to sleep she felt that Sharkey's arms encircled her neck.

In Cuba Sharkey became a hanger-on and a spy for the officials. His gratitude to the woman who saved his miserable neck from the gallows was evidenced by numerous beatings, the brutality of which compelled the interference of some decent

men, who prevailed upon Maggie to return to New York. Sharkey was forced to leave Cuba and he went to Spain, where he joined the army and sank out of sight. Maggie Jordan is now living in New York, a devoted wife now to poor Billy Scanlon, respected by her associates and by those who know the frightful romance of her early life.

Men who make their mark on the shifting sands of fame are quickly forgotten in these modern days of rapidity. Mansfield Tracy Walworth was one of the most admired writers of light romantic novels a decade and a half ago. Now he seems to be completely forgotten, and if he is remembered at all by the general public it is more because of his sensational taking of than of anything he did. He was a son of the great Chancellor Walworth, and was a literary lion with the belles and beaux during the Saratoga seasons. His marital life was unhappy, and some of the letters which he wrote to his wife revealed a depth of miserliness which was remarkable in a writer of romances. The wife left him to avoid his brutality, and to her nineteen-year-old son Frank she told her tale of misery.

Young Walworth came down from Saratoga and went to the Sturtevant House on an afternoon early in June, 1873. Then he left a card at the home of his father asking that the latter call at the hotel in order that some family differences should be adjusted. Early on the following morning the father went to the hotel apartment occupied by the son, and in less than five minutes after reaching there the sound of pistol shots was heard, followed by cries of "Murder!" "My son!"

The Walworth boy walked down stairs

less upon investigation. Twelve days after the murder Christine Cox, a negro, was arrested in Boston and some of the missing jewelry was found in his possession. William H. Balch, a reporter on a Boston newspaper, met Cox on Shawmut avenue, in Boston.

The nervousness of the negro attracted his attention, and he became convinced that he was the servant in the Hall family whose disappearance on the day of the murder had caused suspicion to be directed against him. Balch followed the negro until he entered a church, and then sought the aid of the police. The wretched fellow broke down as soon as he reached the station-house and confessed that he was the murderer.

It seems that he had been employed by Mrs. Hull in such a way that he knew all about her valuables, and in the belief that she had a large amount of cash in a trunk placed under her bed he determined to rob her. Had she slept soundly her life would have been saved, but when she awakened and recognized him he determined to kill her, and smothered her to death. From the time of his arrest until the moment of his execution he was constantly singing hymns and praying, and did not show any evidence of fear until he began his walk to the gallows.

Michael McGloin and Danny Driscoll were two of the most hardened young criminals who were put to death in the Tombs. McGloin deliberately shot an old Frenchman named Hannu, who kept a wine store in West Twenty-fifth street. Hannu was a domesticated man of peaceful disposition, but when one night he was alarmed by the cries of his family that thieves were in the wine shop, he left his living apartments



Murderer Sharkey's Escape in the Guise of a Veiled Woman.

to the hotel office as calm and collected as though nothing out of the ordinary had occurred and asked that the police be called, saying: "I have shot my father."

Then he sent a telegram to his mother's brother, in Chicago, apprising him of what he had done. In the resulting trial of this mad boy, Charles O'Connor, had retired from the practice of criminal law upward of twenty years before that, volunteered to appear in defense of the prisoner because of the friendship which had existed between the two, and the former Chancellor. The boy was convicted of murder in the second degree, and the appearance of Mr. O'Connor in his defense was believed to have had much to do with saving him from the gallows.

One of the most horrible murders known to the police of this city was that of Mrs. Jane De Forest Hall, in her bedroom, at No. 140 West Forty-second street. Her husband was a doctor, well along in years, who was very well known because he had been engaged by Jarrett & Palmer, then the lessees and managers of Niblo's Garden, to attend nightly at the theatre upon the ballet girls engaged in the performance of some big spectacle which they had put on there in the series which they had begun a dozen years before with "The Black Croud."

Mrs. Hall was found dead at breakfast time on June 11, 1879. Her arms and her feet were tied with strips of sheeting in the manner which medical men use in wrapping bandages about a wounded part, and this led many persons to believe that her husband had committed the crime.

It was known that Mrs. Hall had a considerable private fortune and that she was a frequent speculator in Wall Street. In fact, the last person who was known to have seen her alive was a stock broker who looked after her speculative interests. The room had been stripped of its portable valuables, and jewelry valued at about one thousand dollars had been stolen. There were lots of clues, but all of them proved value-

over the store to drive them out. He was dead a few minutes afterward. To catch the murderer was one of the most difficult tasks which I ever undertook. There was absolutely no clue, but I kept at the case and was satisfied that McGloin was the murderer long before I could get evidence enough on which to arrest him. He was brought to my office, and I had him sit at a window overlooking the inner courtyard while I sat at my desk, ignoring him completely. Looking out of the window, he saw pass and repass across the courtyard some of the members of his gang who knew that he had murdered the old Frenchman. His guilty conscience broke down his determination and he confessed.

In the arrest and punishment by hanging of Danny Driscoll, the "Whyo" gang of young ruffians which had infested the lower end of the Bowery and the streets contiguous to it to the danger of life and property for several years, was effectively broken up. Driscoll killed his sweetheart, "Betsy" Garrity. She was a product of the slums, and her great desire was to be considered "tough." It was told of her by her companions that she would step up to different of the young ruffians of her acquaintance and, clasping her hands behind her back, would beg them and challenge them to punch her face with all their force, at the same time snoring at their inability to strike her sufficiently hard to provoke an expression of pain.

The last execution that took place in the Tombs occurred in the middle of December, 1880. There will be no more.

Very probably the new prison, which is to take the place of the Tombs, will be known simply as the City Prison. The picturesque architecture as well as the brightness of the name, made the Tombs a known name like Newgate. The New York City Prison will seldom if ever be heard of, and being heard of, will be quickly forgotten.

THOMAS BYRNES,
Former Superintendent of Police.

What
Wonder-
ful
Stories!
What
Ro-
mances!
What
Comedies
and
Trag-
edies!



The Famous Murderers' Row.

Its
Slime-
Stained
Walls
Could
Tell
If They
Could
But
Speak!